

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
USMISSION USNATO
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USCINCEUR
USNMR SHAPE
USDOCOSOUTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L ATHENS 5364

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, GR, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET DELEGATION VISITS GREECE

REF: ATHENS 4959

1. THE DELEGATION OF THE SUPREME SOVIET, HEADED BY VICE
PRESIDENT IVAN POLIAKOF, ENCOUNTERED ONLY A MODERATELY WARM
WELCOME DURING THEIR WEEK-LONG (JUNE 17-24) STAY IN GREECE,
ALTHOUGH THERE WAS FREQUENT RHETORIC ON BOTH SIDES ABOUT THE
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DESIRABILITY OF IMPROVING RELATIONS BETWEEN THE GREEK AND
RUSSIAN PEOPLES. SINCE THE VISIT RECIPROCATED ONE MADE BY A
GREEK PARLIAMENTARY GROUP LAST YEAR, PARLIAMENT PRESIDENT
PAPASPYROU HOSTED THE RUSSIANS IN SPITE OF THE ACT THAT
PARLIAMENT BEGAN ITS SUMMER RECESS ON THE EVE OF THEIR ARRIVAL.
AND WHILE THE VISITORS CALLED ON PRESIDENT TSATSOS AS WELL AS
VARIOUS OTHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND INDIVIDUAL OPPOSITION

LEADERS, PRIME MINISTER KARAMANLIS DECLINED TO SEE THEM. AT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, MINISTER GEORGE RALLIS, WHO WILL BE GOING TO MOSCOW IN SEPTEMBER, WAS ABSENT IN KUWAIT FOR SEVERAL DAYS AND DEPUTY MINISTER ZAIMIS RECEIVED THEM INSTEAD. MEDIA COVERAGE WAS MODERATE. A BOMB PLANTED BY UNKNOWN PERSONS INJURED 14 PEOPLE AT A DOWNTOWN THEATER SHOWING A SOVIET FILM DURING THE VISIT.

2. IN HIS PUBLIC POSTURE, POLIAKOF PROVED HIMSELF A SUCCESSFUL PROPONENT OF SOVIET POSITIONS WITHOUT RUFFLING GREEK FEATHERS. HE SPOKE GENERALLY OF THE NEED TO IMPROVE RELATIONS BETWEEN GREECE AND THE USSR AT ALL LEVELS, WHILE DODGING QUESTIONS AS TO WHETHER THE SIGNING OF A POLITICAL DOCUMENT IS IMMINENT OR IF KARAMANLIS WOULD SOON FOLLOW RALLIS TO MOSCOW. ON THE AEGEAN, THE RUSSIAN UNDERLINED THE NECESSITY TO RESOLVE DISPUTES PEACEFULLY WHILE ADHERING TO THE PRACTICE OF INTERNATIONAL LAW.

3. HE REITERATED THE NEED FOR A REPRESENTATIVE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON CYPRUS, CALLING FOR A JUST SOLUTION AND THE WITHDRAWAL OF ALL FOREIGN TROOPS FROM THE ISLAND. (THIS POSITION WOULD APPEAR TO DIFFER WITH JUNE 26 PRESS REPORTS FROM MOSCOW SAYING THAT THE JOINT COMMUNIQUE ISSUED IN CONNECTION WITH THE ECEVIT VISIT ENDORSES THE BICOMMUNAL TALKS ON THE BEST PROCEDURE FOR FINDING A SETTLEMENT). POLIAKOF ALSO REITERATED THE STANDARD USSR CHARGES THAT CERTAIN WESTERN LEADERS ARE ATTEMPTING

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TO TORPEDO DETENTE AND ARE ENGAGING IN NEO-COLONIALISM IN AFRICA.

4. COMMENT: WE UNDERSTAND FROM PARLIAMENTARIANS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE PROGRAM WITH THE RUSSIANS, THAT KARAMANLIS HAD REFUSED TO RECEIVE THE VISITORS FOR SEVERAL REASONS. WITH ECEVIT IN MOSCOW, HE WANTED TO LEARN THE RESULTS OF THAT VISIT BEFORE PERSONALLY BECOMING IDENTIFIED WITH THE RUSSIANS. ALSO, THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOT WISH TO CONVEY THE WRONG SIGNALS TO THE WEST AT THIS CRITICAL PERIOD IN THE GREEK-NATO NEGOTIATIONS. IN SUM, SAID OUR SOURCES, WHILE THE VISIT WAS SATISFACTORY, NOT TOO MUCH SIGNIFICANT SHOULD BE ATTRIBUTED TO IT.

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